

50TH PARTRIDGE ACADEMY REUNION



By Blanche B. White

"Gold not Gilt" was the motto of the 1923 Class of Partridge Academy (Duxbury High School). Uninspired and old-fashioned though it may sound today, it certainly produced "good omen" results for the largest class (17) to have graduated from that school up to that time. Fifteen of us have made it thus far to our 50th the "Golden" reunion.

This will be the fifth reunion we have held. The first time we got together was our 30th, at which we had a perfect attendance, including our witty and elderly principal, the late Robert Cushman. Our 40th and 45th were fairly well attended, and then we began "running scared," so we held a 47th just to be sure, and it was well we did as we lost 2 of our members in the past 4 years.

This year 14 of us some with wives and husbands, met at the home of John and Evelyn Peterson on Tremont St. for a social

hour and to look at old snapshots and programs. Then we continued our celebration with a dinner-party in Plymouth. A letter of greeting was read from Louise Chubbuck Scott, Florida, who was unable to be present. Jimmy Macfarland moved his vacation forward two weeks to come from Canada to be with us.) We wound up the evening at the home of Carl and Helen Wikstrom.

The most popular question asked when folks hear about this reunion is, "What was life and graduations like in those days in comparison to today?" (It almost sounds as if we graduated right after the Civil War, but for those slow at mental arithmetic, our ages range only in the late 60's).

Our graduation exercises were held in The First Parish Church on June 20. We filed in to the tune of the "March of the Siamese," a catchy little number, played by Joe Pioppi's or-

chestra of Plymouth. It was a torrid evening, and as each of us arose to speak from some newly-varnished chairs there was a distinct ripping sound, and we almost felt sure that some part of our dresses or anatomy had been left in the seats behind us.

Our valedictorian, Bob Osborne, was ill and Phil Delano had to read Bob's essay and farewell for him Howard Mann was our salutarian. In those days, readings like class will, prophecies, and histories were delivered at graduation exercises, and supposedly added a touch of humor to the proceedings (as I recall, they were pretty corny, and it is just as well that today these rather personal and witty gems are given at private class-parties and not inflicted on their parents and the public).

We were a fairly musical group and loved to sing "A Capital Ship," but they wouldn't let us include it in our graduation music, holding us down to "In the Time of Roses," "Excelsior," and some nice harmony on "Sleep Kentucky Babe." The girls wore white dresses, and the boys wore dark suits (some with long trousers for the first time). We were a no-nonsense bunch. Our class colors were blue and white, our class flower a carnation.

The reception held the following night at Mattakesett Hall was supposed to be tendered us by the juniors, but we always helped with the decorations: vases of wild-flowers and ferns, plus a few cultivated peonies and roses. Refreshments? Wedges of home made cake, with ice cream and tonic donated by local merchants. We earned our own money to pay the orchestra

for dancing. There were no beer parties, no all-night beach or house-parties, and of course with automobiles being scarce, there was less worry. Groups of 4 or 6 piled into the 2 or 3 cars available and took a ride down to Long Bridge to see if it was still in its proper place, then home to bed before the witching hour of midnight. We were not exactly "squares" because we enjoyed all the youthful activities available to us then, baseball, basketball, skating, swimming, dancing, fairs, parades -- and "rapping," without rebelling.

In the days of the silent movies when they rolled the list of credits at the end, they used an expression, "a good cast of characters bears repeating," and their names followed. Here is the list of the 1923 graduates, whose names, after 50 long years, are repeated:

Martha Wadsworth Follansbee (Mrs. Herbert) Concord, N.H.; Helen Thomas Wikstrom (Mrs. Carl) Duxbury; Louise Chubbuck Scott (Mrs. Charles) Florida; Nancy MacFarlane Glass (Mrs. John) Duxbury; Mildred Tammott Glass (Mrs. Elmer) Duxbury; Blanche Burke White (Mrs. William) Duxbury; Robert Osborne, Milton; Howard Mann, Whitman; Philip Delano, Duxbury; John O. Peterson, Duxbury; Victor Shiff, Plymouth; G. Bailey Cushing, Plymouth; Carl Santheson, Duxbury; Ernest Chandler, Duxbury; James MacFarlane, Canada. In memoriam: Gladys Loring Torre (Mrs. Gabriel) New Jersey, died 1969; Sarah Wadsworth Randall (Mrs. Willard) Duxbury, died 1971.

None of the class members remained bachelors or spinsters. All eventually married (a few are now widows or widowers). Their progeny totals 26 children, and heaven knows

how many grandchildren. Some of the class furthered their education before becoming secretaries, schoolteachers, nurses and homemakers, and a few of the "boys" established businesses locally or in nearby towns. No one gained any great fame, but all conducted themselves honorably, and did not tarnish the "Gold." Many of the grads have traveled widely in this country and outside of it, but all of them maintain that "Duxbury is the greatest."